

# family update

April 15, 2020

Dear families,

We hope you are keeping healthy and safe. Your loved ones are doing well. We are monitoring everyone very, very closely. Please be assured that we do not currently have a COVID-19 outbreak at any of our centres.

There are a number of updates to share:

## **Current protocols**

We are immediately implementing all protocols and directives issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health including:

- Screening staff upon their arrival to work
- Increasing cleaning and disinfecting
- Practicing physical distancing except when providing direct care

## **Continuous masking**

Late last week, the Chief Medical Officer of Health issued an order that staff in continuing care and supportive living centres must continuously wear a surgical/procedure mask in all interactions with residents and at times when it is not possible to maintain physical distancing between co-workers (for example when a resident requires assistance by two staff at the same time):

- The masks are meant to protect others from droplets the wearer may release in their day-to-day work and interactions
- Wearing a mask may prevent the spread of COVID-19 should the person wearing the mask be infected and be asymptomatic
- We had enough supply of these masks on hand that staff were able to begin wearing them soon after the directive was issued
- Alberta Health Services is distributing additional supplies of masks regularly
- Staff continue to conduct a point of care risk assessment (PCRA) prior to interacting with a resident and determine whether personal protective equipment (PPE), in addition to a mask, is required

## **Single site employment**

The Chief Medical Officer of Health also ordered that all employees at continuing care and supportive living centres must work at only one site for the duration of the pandemic; this applies to all staff (care, hospitality, maintenance, etc.)

- Many employees work at more than one site and for more than one employer
- We have been talking with our employees and asking them to share what site they would prefer to work at

- How this order will be implemented is being determined by the provincial government; more information will be available in the coming days
- The provincial government is considering financial supports for Health Care Aides and continuing care providers to minimize the impacts of this change
- From what we understand, this order will take effect on April 23, 2020

### **Levels of outbreak**

There are three levels of outbreak: suspected, probable, and confirmed; we must notify Alberta Health Services COVID-19 Response in any of those three instances:

- Suspected—one resident or staff exhibits one or more symptoms of COVID-19
- Probable—two or more linked individuals who exhibit one or more COVID-19 symptoms
- Confirmed—one resident or staff is diagnosed with COVID-19
- You will be notified if there is a probable or confirmed outbreak
- COVID-19 symptoms are similar to the symptoms of many other viruses, including respiratory infections and influenza; it is not unusual in congregate living environments for two or more individuals to exhibit symptoms such as fever, cough, diarrhea, runny nose, etc.
- It is possible that we will send you notices of a probable outbreak—even though it may not be a COVID-19 outbreak; our intention is not to cause worry or heighten anxiety with these notices but rather to comply with the orders of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

### **Visiting**

Thank you for your understanding and support in not visiting your loved ones. We know this is difficult. We are pleased that many families are connecting with their loved ones by phone or virtually through FaceTime, Skype, or Zoom. It is so important to maintain the connection and for you to hear each other's voices. Thank you for adjusting to this new way of visiting.

**Please rest assured that we are doing our very best to care for your loved ones. We believe that caring for people is a calling and starts with a sense of purpose and a desire to serve. Covenant has always advocated for caring for the whole person—body, mind, and soul. We are doing our best to do just that.**

Please direct questions to your Site Administrator or send them to us at [admin@covenantcare.ca](mailto:admin@covenantcare.ca). For the most recent information on the pandemic please see [ahs.ca/COVID](https://ahs.ca/COVID).

We will continue to be in touch. Please stay healthy and well.

Derrick Bernardo  
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